Joint BA/MA in Computational Social Science

Department Website: http://macss.uchicago.edu

General Information

The Master of Arts in Computational Social Science (http://macss.uchicago.edu) is a two-year program of graduate study. It has a structured curriculum, with a total of 18 required and elective courses tailored to the disciplinary track a student follows. Students submit an article-length MA thesis in their second year, after completing a three-quarter research commitment working directly with a member of the executive or affiliated faculty (http://macss.uchicago.edu/directories/full/all/).

The program aims to produce leading social scientists in each of the core social science fields—economics, sociology, political science, psychology, history, and anthropology—producing competitive PhD applicants, well-trained in computational approaches, who have mastered the research and analytical skills necessary to make important contributions.

Students receive close mentorship from the program’s faculty director, academic staff, and members of the executive and affiliated faculty.

They receive full professional support from the director of career services, with biweekly workshops, career planning, and employer recruitment.

Finally, all MA students may participate in an optional summer practicum between their first and second years, with internships drawn from academic and professional organizations. International students have three years of STEM work eligibility after they graduate.

Program Requirements and Course Work

Students submit an article-length MA thesis in their second year.

Courses are selected with the advice of the academic staff and follow different disciplinary tracks, tailored to the research commitments of each student.

In their first year, all students take a three-course core: Perspectives on Computational Analysis, Perspectives on Computational Modeling, and Perspectives on Computational Research.

Most take a three-course sequence on Computer Science with Applications (with more advanced courses for students with prior exposure).

The remaining three courses vary and depend on the student’s prior training and disciplinary path. Priority will go to any needed courses in statistics, linear algebra, or advanced mathematics in particular disciplines (e.g., real analysis in economics). If those requirements are met, the student will take up to three social science electives in their area of research.

In their second year, all students take three advanced courses in computational methods, three social science electives, and three additional graduate courses from any University department or professional school where the student meets the minimum prerequisites.

Should they choose, students may take the MA Research Commitment, a three-course sequence producing an MA thesis modeled on a professional journal article, in place of the three additional graduate courses.

Outside of their course work, all MA students are expected to attend the weekly Computation Workshop, where advanced scholars and invited guests present drafts of their research for critique and discussion.

Admission

Students who wish to pursue a joint BA/MA degree should consult first with their College adviser and then with the associate dean of students (Kelly Pollock, kpollock@uchicago.edu) in the Autumn Quarter of their third year.

Please see this page (https://macss.uchicago.edu/content/bama-degree-requirements/) to review our eligibility requirements for the BA/MA.

Any questions about the MA in Computational Social Science can be directed to the managing director (Chad Cyrenne, c-cyrenne@uchicago.edu).

Application Requirements

- Applicants are expected to have a GPA of 3.55 or higher.
- Applications are due by February 1.
- The application (https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/) is submitted online to the dean of students of the Division of the Social Sciences. (See apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply (https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/).)
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- BA/MA applicants should not pay the application fee. Email admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu (admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu?subject=Fee%20Waiver%20BA%20FMA%20Dual%20Degree%20Program) to ask how to receive the fee waiver.
- GRE scores are not required.
- Prospective BA/MA students are expected to complete all of their general education requirements and all but three of their BA requirements before they begin the BA/MA program in the Autumn Quarter of their fourth year.
- Up to three graduate courses can be used as electives in the undergraduate program or can be applied to the undergraduate major, by petition to the director of undergraduate studies.
- Students in the BA/MA program are charged tuition at graduate rates in their fourth year. They retain whatever aid has been provided in the College. In their fifth year, students are eligible for an award of one-half tuition if they achieve a 3.4 GPA over their first nine courses.
- Students may walk and receive the BA in June of their fourth year if they wish to graduate with other members of their College class.
- All other requirements for the MA degree are identical.

HOW TO APPLY

The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions and deadlines, is available online at apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply (https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/).

For additional information about the program, please contact Vanessa Carey, the Student Affairs Administrator, at 773.702.8301 or carey1@uchicago.edu.

Please also visit the Master of Arts in Computational Social Science website at macss.uchicago.edu (https://macss.uchicago.edu/).